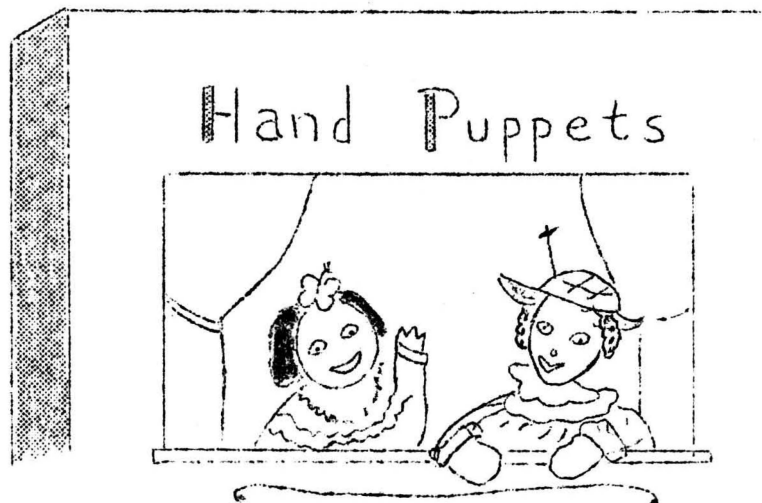


## MAKE YOUR OWN



Prepared by  
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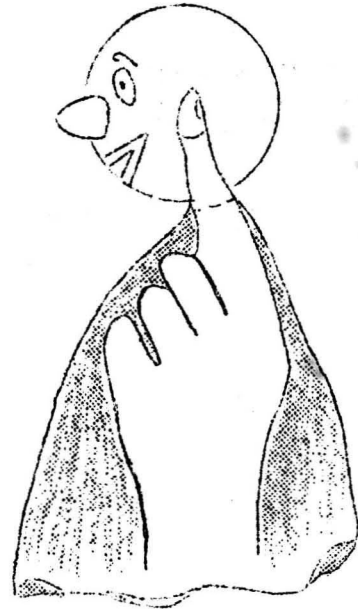
Hand puppets are gay and whimsical. They are easy to make and entertaining to use. Hand puppets can be purely an individual activity or a group activity for your family or club members. Try your skill now at making one! Once the puppet is finished, you will enjoy making a stage and preparing a play.

Simplicity is the most important element in designing puppets. An intricately modeled head or elaborate costume becomes a mere blur when seen on a stage.

Puppets can be created from an amazing assortment of otherwise "scrap" materials. Cloth, wood, paper, string, old stockings, yarn, wooden spoons and tinfoil are just a few of the many materials which can be used. A very simple hand puppet can be made from an old tennis ball and a piece of cloth or handkerchief. Draw a face on the ball and cut a hole in it for the puppet's neck. Place a cardboard tube about 3 inches long and just wide enough for your forefinger through this hole. This gives rigidity to the puppet's neck. Wrap the cloth or handkerchief around the tube, just at the base of the ball. This is the puppet's costume. A nose, hair or hat may be added if you wish.

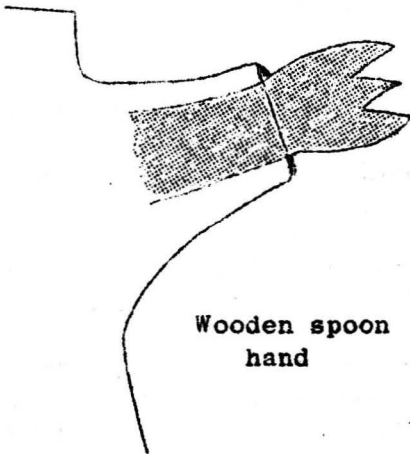
Hand puppets ordinarily consist of three parts: head, body and hands. The puppet's head may be made of a rubber ball, papier mâché, wood, cloth or any number of other materials. Regardless of which type you make, there should always be a hole in the head through which the operator's forefinger can be placed. Instructions are given below for making a cloth head.

Cut two pieces--using the head pattern. (Cloth or felt may be used.) Stitch along the dotted lines. Turn inside out and stuff. Cotton or old nylon stockings (shredded) may be used for stuffing. Leave a central hole for the operator's finger. Insert a short length (about 3 inches) of cardboard tubing into the neck hole. This cardboard tubing should fit the operator's forefinger loosely.



To finish the head, embroider or print a face to suit the character which your puppet represents. Make a wig of yarn and sew or glue it in place.

Next, make the body. Any strong, supple cloth can be used. (If you wish to change the puppet's costume, make a permanent undergarment of a plain material and fit it to the puppet's head. Costumes can be put on over this.) Cut a smock-shaped garment, using the attached pattern. You may wish to change the size of the garment to fit the operator's hand. Stitch along the dotted lines. Turn inside out. Hem at the bottom edge. The neck of the garment is pulled in with gathering stitches (a-b) and glued to the neck of the puppet.



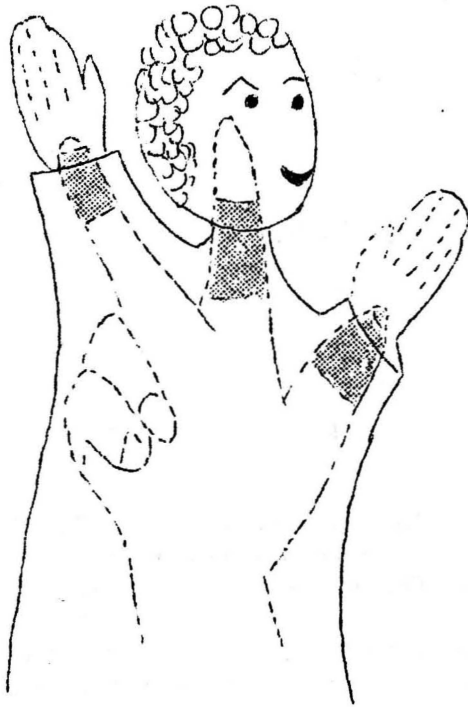
Wooden spoon  
hand

Finally, make the hands. The puppet's hands should be about as long as his head. They are attached to the sleeves of the garment (c-d) after the sleeves have been hemmed. Several types of hands can be used. The simplest are wooden forks. One fork is used for each hand. Break off the handle of the fork so it is three inches long, and glue it into place. Let one inch of the tines of the fork extend beyond the sleeve of the garment. The handles of the forks take the place of the cardboard tubes when the operator uses the puppet.

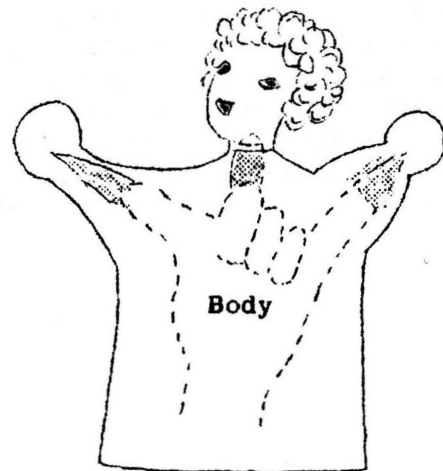
Hands can also be cut from cloth. (Felt is excellent for this.) Cut out the hands, using the pattern. Stitch along the dotted lines. Turn inside out. Stuff the ends with cotton or old nylon stockings. Attach short pieces of cardboard to the wrists for control of the puppet's hand movements and glue the hands (or stitch) to the hemmed ends of the sleeves.

Now you are ready to learn how to manipulate your puppet. Hand puppets can move from place to place, dance, pick up and set down objects and accomplish many other activities. They rely upon the operator's hands to do these things. His thumb and third finger move the puppet's hands, his forefinger the puppet's head. The operator's wrist is the puppet's waistline. This permits the puppet to bow and to bend backwards. The puppet turns when the operator rotates his forearm. By pinching his fingers together, the operator can make the puppet pick up and carry objects.

Since your third finger is naturally higher than your thumb, you may find that the puppet's hands tend to stick up in the air, often hiding its face. With practice, the operator can learn to keep the puppet's hands down and away from the face.



Hair - Sew on loops of wool  
with embroidery needle and  
yarn.



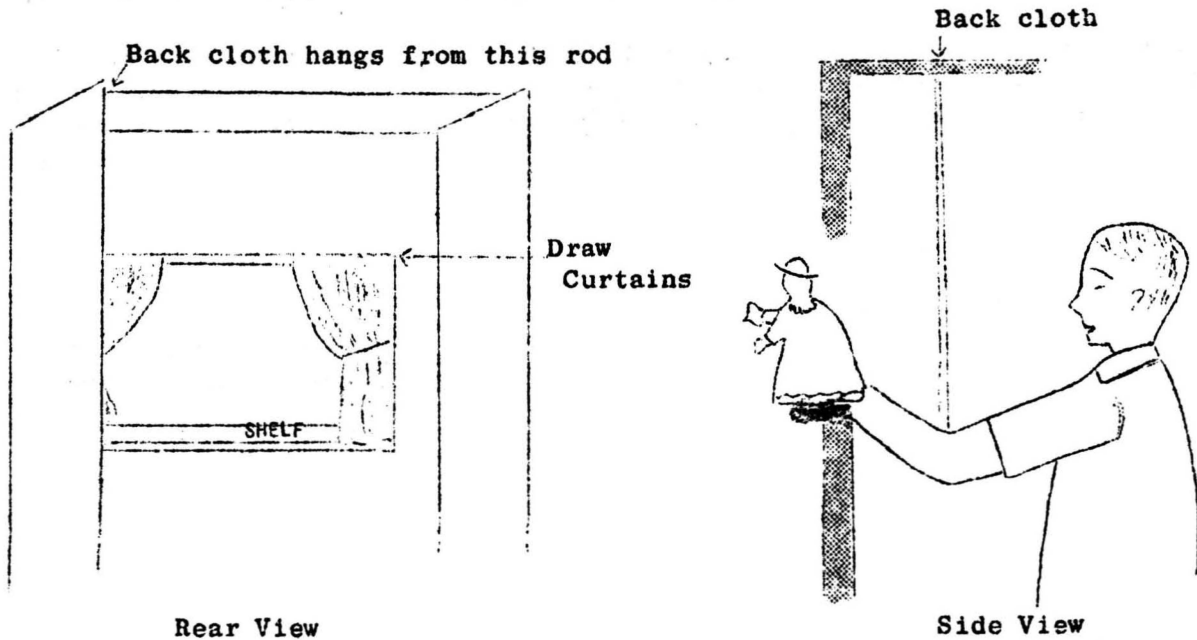
Optional Method:

Showing use of little  
finger in place of third  
finger.



Animal Puppets

In constructing a puppet theater, remember that the operator must be below the stage. Below is a general plan of a hand puppet theater. The operator may stand, kneel or sit. A shelf helps to keep the puppet in place. The back cloth can be made of any fine material through which the operator can see but cannot be seen. Cardboard scenery can be glued to this cloth, leaving peep-holes for the showman. Screens, movable blackboards or stationary objects can be used to improvise a stage. A draw curtain will give that professional touch.



And now, on with the play! Although you should know the story well, it is not necessary to memorize parts. Speaking parts will be more natural if they are done ad-lib, and the play will not be upset if someone forgets his part. Instead of many characters in a play, use just a few. Be sure your puppet is alive when he speaks. Movement is vital to a puppet during a performance, for in this way the audience knows which puppet is talking. By careful control of head movements and gestures, all meaningless movement can be eliminated.

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